

THE

HISTORIAN

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OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi

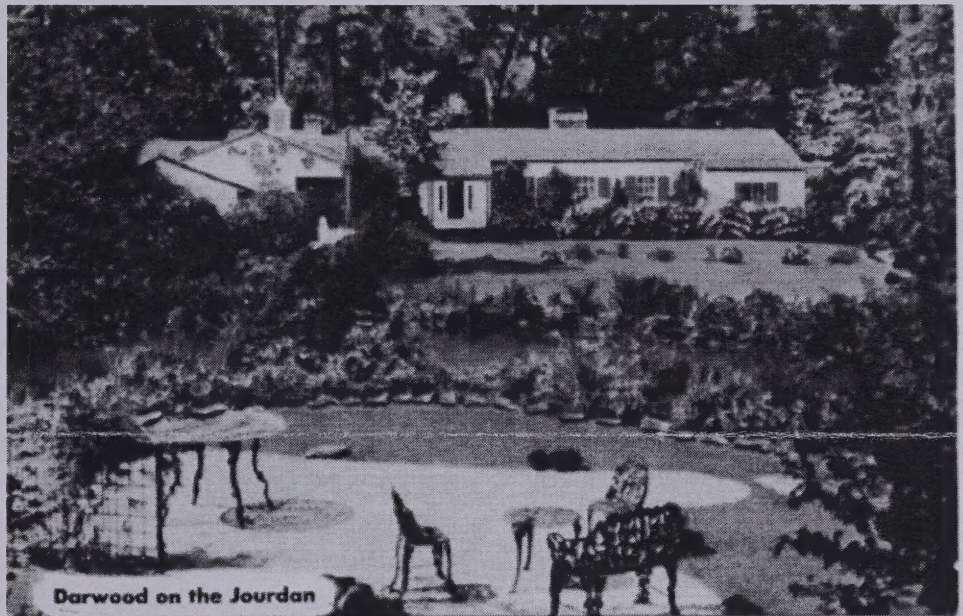
JULY 2005

JULY HAPPENINGS

The monthly luncheon meeting will be held on Thursday, July 21, at the Kate Lobrano House at 108 Cue Street at 12:00 noon. This month's guest speaker will be Mr. Carter Church, who will speak on the designing and making of Mardi Gras costumes. Please call 467-4090 for reservations since the seating will be limited. The cost of the luncheon is \$7.00, payable at the door. If you call to make reservations and leave a message on the machine, please spell the names of those for whom you are making reservations so that the house staff will be sure to make a correct list.

HALLOWEEN CEMETERY TOUR

Our annual Halloween Cemetery Tour is approaching faster than most of us would like to think. If you would like to volunteer to help with this year's tour, please let us know. We will need volunteers for actors/actresses, guides, and hostesses. We also would love to have donations of candy, cookies, cupcakes, etc.



REDISCOVERY OF THE JOURDAN

According to the *Dixie Times-Picayune Roto Magazine* (April 19, 1953), a "new era" had come to the Jourdan River in Southern Mississippi. "City farmers" were turning ravaged pine stump land along the banks into blooming gardens and green pastures.

These new settlers along the river were mostly business and professional men from New Orleans who had discovered the beauties of the Jourdan's banks

as a summer vacation spot.

According to the article the Jourdan stretched for thirty miles from Catahoula Creek south of Picayune down to Bay St. Louis. Once the avenue for a thriving lumber industry, the river became idle between 1913 and 1929 when the pine forests in the surrounding country were depleted without a thought of re-seeding. When the last of the long leaf yellow pine hit the sawdust trail, the saw mills closed abruptly leaving fields of stumps and a lumber ghost town with one of the largest sawdust

THE

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OF HANCOCK COUNTY

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**LOBRANO HOUSE
 HOURS**

MONDAY — FRIDAY
 10:00AM — 3:00PM

MISSION STATEMENT

To preserve the general and architectural history of Hancock County and to preserve the Kate Lobrano House and collections therein; to research and interpret life in Hancock County; and to encourage an appreciation of and interest in historical preservation.

NEW MEMBERS

Mr. Earl Hollingshead, Mobile, AL
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piles in the world.

In the 1930's the Jourdan was "rediscovered" by the "city folk" and much of its river bank had gone back to a lush primitive state. Wild flowers grew everywhere: fox and quail hunting were excellent, and both fresh and salt water fish ventured up its waters.

Some just built summer homes, but a few came to live permanently on the Jourdan, commuting between New Orleans and their river estates.

A few of the better known estates were Holly Bluff and Darwood on the Jourdan.

HOLLY BLUFF

Holly Bluff was the permanent home of the James L. Crump family, and it covered thirty-six hundred acres, fifty acres of which were devoted to a garden wonderland of camellias, azaleas, holly, magnolia and hundreds of native wildflowers and trees. In the center of this garden overlooking the river was the Crump house, a massive hunting lodge of logs brought from the swamplands along the Pearl River. Forty eight-foot-long cypress beams supported thousands of hand-hewn cypress shingles to form the roof of the lodge. It was a showcase for visitors.

James L. Crump was a New Orleans cotton broker who retired in the 1940s. At Holly Bluff he experimented with growing highland rice and raising Braford cattle for the coastal area.

Crump's best known creation, however, was Holly Bluff Gardens. These gardens reached from U.S. Highway 90 to Kiln Road and were open all year long to the public. Located on the right bank of the Jourdan, their name was taken from

the great Southern hollies that grew on the river's sandy bluff.

Two miles of pathways wound among ancient live oaks draped with Spanish moss, towering pines, gnarled cypress, maple and gum trees, with dogwood, wild plum, and hollies from England and China blended with the native variety. In this natural setting, the art of blending exotic and foreign shrubs and flowers with the original background was carried to near perfection.

Cherokee roses, wisteria, and wild cherry also competed for the visitor's attention with azaleas, camellias, spirea, mountain laurel, ardesia, iris, gardenias, and many kinds of ferns.

Further along were some small log cabins and a split-rail fence. An old mill wheel was put into motion by a mere trickle of water. One of the few remaining "carry-logs," used to haul timber from the forests, was set among the shrubs and flowers.

Appearing in the path was a statue of the crusader king, Louis IX of France, for whom Bay Saint Louis and its adjacent body of water were named. The owners of Holly Bluff Gardens brought this statue from France to put in the gardens.

Also in the gardens was the "Little Museum," containing articles collected or purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Crump during a lifetime of travel. These objects included Etruscan, Grecian, and Roman pottery. Clay objects dating back to the fifth and sixth centuries, bronze figures from excavations along the Mediterranean, sparkling rare old glassware from Germany, porcelains from the famous Meissen factory, and delicate porcelain from China were also on display.

[illegible]



Early Kiln School

PUBLIC EDUCATION IN HANCOCK COUNTY

The system of public education which we enjoy today began in 1848 with the passage of a special act of the Mississippi Legislature. However, this act was limited to only four counties—Hinds, Jefferson, Wilkinson, and Amite. A later law established a superintendent of education for *each* county in the state. The first county superintendent of education in Hancock County was appointed in 1870 for a set term of two years. In 1890 this term was extended to four years. Even though early records of Shieldsborough show a school fund dating back to 1858, there is no record of free schools at that time. Of course, St. Stanislaus College, St. Joseph's Academy, and St. Rose de Lima School existed in the mid-1800's in Bay St. Louis as well as a secular private school operated by a Mrs. Hawthorne in Pearlinton.

By the 1890's there were more than forty one-teacher schools, white and black, in the rural areas of the county. Evidence of some of

these schools such as Dilville and Taylor now exists only in the memories of the elder citizens in the county, in the stories recounted to grandchildren, or in faded photographs lying in abandoned albums in the attic. Many of these schools were poorly maintained with meager facilities according to an interview with Mr. W. W. Stockstill conducted in March 1937 as part of the Works Progress Administration (W. P. A.) program. Mr. Stockstill served as Hancock County Superintendent of Education from 1900-1908.

In the early years of education in Hancock County, small schools were established in the various communities throughout the county. Some people remember Gainesville, Turtle Skin, Dead Tiger, Gravel Pit, Catahoula, and Bagget schools. There was also a provision made for an Indian school in 1884 near the Indian settlement at Bayou LaCroix. This school operated as late as 1895.

In February 1937 Mr. John Craft, who served as Hancock County Superintendent of Education

from 1908-1920, was interviewed Edmond J. Giering, who worked on the W. P. A. Project. The following information has been gleaned from that interview.

Mr. Craft considered the most outstanding achievement of his administration to be the consolidation of the county schools. Prior to 1908 there were no definite district lines for the various schools in the county, so the school board authorized that a new map be drawn and new districting be made of the schools. Pearl River and Harrison Counties had already reorganized and consolidated many of their schools along these lines, and to keep pace with the rapidly developing educational activity in the state, Hancock County followed suit. At that time, the county school board was composed of Asa S. Weston of Logtown, Beat 1; Wiley Smith, Picayune, Beat 2; Price W. Lee, Caesar, Beat 3; W. A. Cuevas, Fenton, Beat 4; and George Hick Edwards, Bay St. Louis, Beat 5. In addition to joining in the educational progress of the state, the most notable advantages of this reorganization were better health conditions, improved rural life activity, and more professionally trained rural teachers.

Consolidation brought better health conditions in the form of more comfortable school furniture and improved sanitary facilities with the installation of water coolers, individual drinking cups, and better toilet facilities. Improved rural life activity came in the form of a better knowledge of beautifying the school grounds as well as the introduction of conveniences in the home to make life in rural school communities more attractive. More professionally trained teachers came in the form of placing *some* educational requirements on teachers such as more professional education.

The chief objection to con-

solidation was, as usual, increased taxation, but the objection was overcome through the diligent efforts of the county superintendent and other interested citizens. The Sellers School was formed out of the Crane Creek, the Cap Ladnier, and parts of the Standard schools in the fall of 1914 and officially became the Sellers Consolidated School. In 1915, the Dedeaux Line School was formed out of Dedeaux, Sand Hill, Orphan Creek, and part of Standard. The Kiln Consolidated School, which embraced a large taxing unit, was formed from the Necaise, Fenton, McLeod, Silver Hill, and Bayou Talla schools in 1916. With over four hundred students the first year, it was one of the largest consolidated schools in the state and was proclaimed by the state superintendent of education to be one of the outstanding units of consolidation. Two years later in 1918, the Lakeshore School was formed out of the Clermont Harbor, Ansley, and Lakeshore areas. By the end of 1919, the number of one-teacher schools in the county had been reduced by more than one-half.

In 1937 when the W. P. A. Research Project was written, there were fifteen elementary schools in the county for the education of both black and white students. There were also four consolidated high schools in Hancock County. At this time the practice of "Separate, but Equal" was prevalent throughout the state, and the high schools appear to have been limited to white students only.

The schools located in Beat 1 were the Logtown School and the Gainesville School for white children and "The Point" in Pearlington and the Gainesville Colored School for black children. All of these schools offered instruction through the eighth grade.

Aaron Academy is the only school listed in the W. P. A. report as

being in Beat 2 in 1937. It was a grammar school located at the intersection of Highways 11 and 90. *[Editor's note: I can't find an intersection of Highways 11 and 90 on the map. Can anyone help with the location of this school?]*

In Beat 3 there were two grammar schools, Leetown and Catahoula, and two high schools, Caesar High School and Kiln Vocational High School. Caesar, a line school located partially in Pearl River County and partially in Hancock County, offered classes from primary through twelfth grades. The Kiln Vocational High School was a senior high school with a curriculum offering home science, music, and athletics. Since it was a vocational high school, agriculture students had an outside project such as raising a bale of cotton, an acre of corn, etc., in addition to regular class work.

Beat 4 boasted two high schools and four grammar schools for black children. The high schools were Sellers Vocational High School, located on the northern line between Harrison and Hancock

Counties, and Dedeaux School, another consolidated vocational senior high school also situated on the Harrison and Hancock County line several miles south of the Sellers School. The schools for black children were the Fenton, Catahoula, Jourdan River, and Bagget Schools.

Edwardsville School, Gulfview School, and Clermont Harbor School were all found in Beat 5. Edwardsville School was situated on Bayou Choctaw; Gulfview School was located at Lakeshore one mile north of the seawall; and Clermont Harbor School sat halfway between the seawall and the railroad in Clermont Harbor.

Because of the changing demographics of Hancock County, later consolidation of schools in the decades following the 1910's has caused many of these schools to be closed and others opened. Even though they currently exist only in the old stories and legends handed down from parent to child, they have played a very important part in developing the character, vision, and aspirations of the citizens of Hancock County.



Logtown School, 1890's



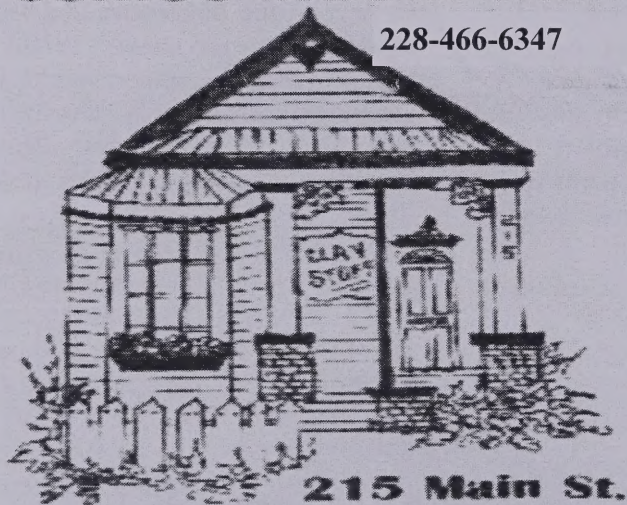
Students at Dilville School



Teacher Effie Necaise's fourth grade class at Kiln School
late 1920's or early 1930's

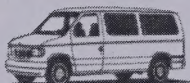
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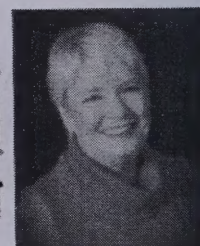
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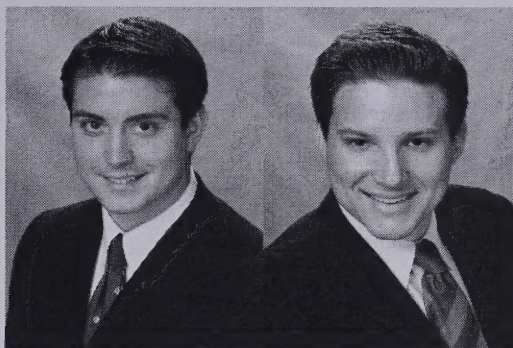
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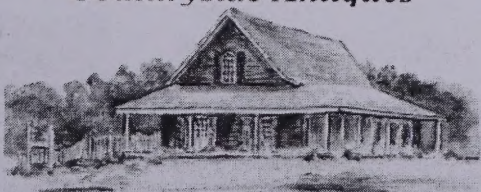
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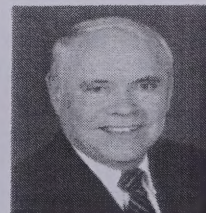


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